

Arizona Judicial Branch  
**2008** Achievement Awards **Winners!!**

*The Superior Court in Pinal County is the recipient of two prestigious awards issued by the state's highest court, the Arizona Supreme Court. Each year the Supreme Court recognizes outstanding programs, services and personnel that contribute to the Mission and Vision of the state court system. In Pinal County two programs were recently recognized for their excellence in the two categories: Protecting Children, Families and Youth, and Improving Communication and Cooperation with the Community, Other Branches of Government and within the Judicial Branch. Contributions made by these two programs to the court system in Pinal County improve services to the public and the constituents it serves. Congratulations for a job well done.*

**Program: Juvenile Court Services**  
**Pinal County Community Advisory Board Creates Partnerships**  
**Category: Protecting Children, Families and Communities**

Pinal County Community Advisory Board (CAB) represents citizen volunteers from diverse professional, cultural and community backgrounds. They are appointed by the Presiding Juvenile Judge to help evaluate and enhance services provided by Juvenile Court Services. The common interest is to ensure that Juvenile Court practices continue to reflect the best interests of youth, families, victims and the community.



The CAB has been instrumental in providing creative contributions through a number of successful projects. These projects are selected to fit the needs of probationers, create community partnerships, and improve programs to juveniles detained in our Youth Justice Center.

Although they have done nearly a dozen projects, three are highlighted to emphasize their goal to improve Pinal County while protecting our children, families and their own communities.

**"Probation Works!" Incentive Program** was created as a joint project between the CAB and probation staff. Working with probation officers, the CAB came up with a plan teach responsibility by rewarding probationers for good behavior. Grade improvements, completion of community service and early paying of restitution are just some of the things that will earn them extra points.

**Character Counts Essay Contest:** This contest is open to Pinal County youth in grades K-12, including those who are home-schooled. Students write about one of the six pillars of "character". Now in its third year, the contest brought in over 825 entries from 120 entries. The CAB members spend countless hours evaluating these entries.

**Youth Justice Center (YJC) Activities:** The CAB has been instrumental in bringing three new projects to the Youth Justice Facility. The CAB recently created: *Photography/Art Program*; created partnership with YMCA to receive \$17,000 worth of exercise equipment to begin a *"Healthy Body, Healthy Mind" Program*; created *music component* for detainees. Instruments such as a trombone, keyboard, guitar, clarinet and harmonica were donated. Wal-Mart Distribution Center donated \$1,000 to help purchase more equipment and instructional materials and *Book Drive* for the facility brought over 1,000 donated books.

**Program: Superior Court Administration**  
**Superior Court's Mental Health Task Force: Thinking Outside the Box**

**Category: Improving Communication and Cooperation with the Community, Other Branches of Government and within the Judicial Branch (Honorable Mention)**

Integrate, leverage, partnership, team; all words used to describe "successful" collaborations. The Superior Court in Pinal County has put forth a collaborative effort to work toward implementing a Mental Health Task Force. The mission of the Mental Health Task Force is to address the unique needs of the mentally ill in our criminal justice system by ensuring they are treated with dignity and provided with the opportunity for treatment while at the same time protecting the public safety. The Mental Health Task Force goals include:

- creating effective interaction between the justice and mental health systems,
- ensuring effective legal advocacy for the mentally ill defendant,
- determining the most effective and least restrictive treatment options available,
- monitoring the delivery and receipt of mental health services and treatment,
- soliciting participation from consumers and family members in court decisions as much as possible,
- diverting appropriate mentally ill defendants with criminal charges to community based mental health programs, while ensuring on-going public safety.

To address this ever-growing problem, Pinal County created the **Superior Court's Mental Health Task Force**. Through a collaborative effort, the County has worked to improve the integration of services of both the criminal justice and mental health systems. Initiated by the Superior Court Administration, the Pinal County Health and Human Services Department now manages the collaborative effort. The project ensures public safety as well as public health by more efficiently and effectively responding to those whose criminal behavior is likely the result of mental illness.

The group currently consists of representatives of the Superior Court bench, the County Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Clerk of Court's Office, the Pinal County Jail, Pinal County Health and Human Services, Court Administration, Adult Probation, multiple Community Mental Health providers, and the Regional Behavioral Health Authority.